

# CHRB NEWS & REVIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

NOVEMBER, 2001

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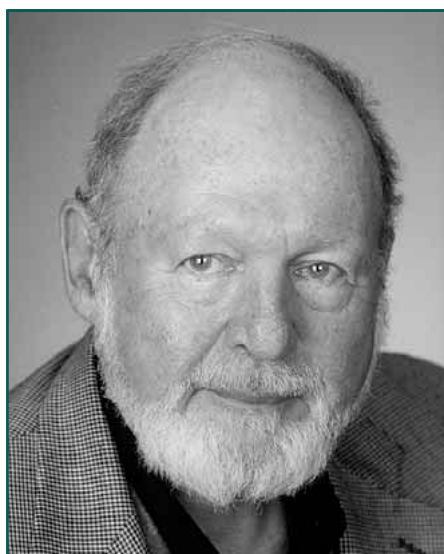
## AN ALAN LANDSBURG PRODUCTION

Alan Landsburg has spent a lifetime promoting worthwhile causes.

"I was brought up in a family," he says, "which was devoted to fulfilling Judaism's 613 good deeds."

A graduate of New York University, he served a two-year military tour during the Korean conflict. Landsburg then joined the radio and television industry, and over the last 45 years he has written, directed, and/or produced an admirable list of television series, movies, dramas, and documentaries focusing on some of the most consequential issues of our time.

Spousal abuse, rape, religious intolerance, child sexual abuse, breast cancer, and AIDS are some of the important subjects Landsburg has treated



ALAN LANDSBURG

with candor, intelligence, and sensitivity.

Among more than 50 television movies to his credit are "Adam" and its sequel "Adam – His Song Continues," which changed the world of kidnapped children in America, and "Bill – On His Own," which did a lot for the mentally challenged in this country.

Landsburg helped found Find the Children, a group committed to returning children to their proper homes, and he has been honored by ICAN, an organization that works with police and other agencies for the protection of children. He helped create the first national hot line giving free advice to asthma sufferers.

(Continued on page 8)

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**A** new law that takes effect January 1 marks the end of an era in California horse racing—and the start of a promising new one.

AB 1093 requires the CHRB to refer all major equine medication violations to administrative law judges (ALJs) to hear the cases and write recommended decisions for racing commissioners. This process bypasses the stewards, who historically have conducted hearings on all violations of CHRB regulations.

The stewards will continue to handle the majority of medication violations, but they will be cut out of the loop when the case involves Class 1, 2, or 3 prohibited substances – unless the licensee and the Board mutually agree to allow the stewards to hear the case.

The new process will be good for the public, good for horsemen, and good for the stewards. Having once been a steward myself, I know what I'm talking about.

Medication cases have grown increasingly difficult. Attorneys for both sides often present complicated scientific evidence and cite complex points of law. ALJs are better qualified to hear these cases. And hearings will be expedited under the new process. ALJs will be required to conduct a hearing within 90 days of the accusation.

AB 1093 also increases the maximum fines to \$50,000 for medication cases and \$100,000 for all other violations. This gives us a wider range of options and a meaningful alternative to suspensions.

Racing commissioners will continue to have the final word in the administrative process, but they will have more flexibility and a firmer legal footing on which to base their decisions.

*Roy C. Wood, Jr.*  
Roy C. Wood, Jr.



## IN THE GOLDEN STATE

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



**By Jacqueline Wagner  
CHRB Staff**

*The Legislature introduced 25 bills related to horse racing during this past legislative session. Eleven of those bills passed both houses of the California Legislature and were sent to the governor. Eight of the bills were signed into law. The remaining three bills were vetoed.*

Governor Gray Davis signed the following bill as urgency legislation, effective July 16, 2001:

AB 413 – Chapter 65 (Assemblyman Tom Harman) establishes the annual California-bred Quarter Horse Championship races and provides funding to supplement the purses for these races using existing revenues generated from a percentage of wagers.

Governor Davis signed the following seven bills as non-urgency legislation, effective January 1, 2002:

SB 95 – Chapter 935 (Senator Edward Vincent) authorizes the CHRB to enter into an interstate licensing compact in order to issue a “national license” to certain racing participants that would be recognized by all participating racing jurisdictions, provided that California’s participation does not diminish state licensing standards relating to an applicant’s criminal history and does not prevent the enforcement of any state law or regulation affecting any licensee.

SB 590 – Chapter 936 (Senator Don Perata) allows a thoroughbred racing association or fair in the northern zone to increase the number of imported racing simulcasts if the total number of thoroughbred and fair racing days allocated in the northern zone by the CHRB is less than the total allocated in 2000.

The total number of races pursuant to this authorization must be sufficient to prevent, to the extent possible, any revenue loss to the General Fund and racing-industry participants as determined by the executive director of the CHRB. However, the number of races that may be simulcast and wagered upon may not exceed a maximum of three out-of-state or international thoroughbred races for every live race that is eliminated by the CHRB, and these races may only be imported on a day when the CHRB has eliminated live racing.

AB 471 – Chapter 198 (Assembly Members Robert Hertzberg, Herb Wesson, Dion Aroner, and Mike Briggs; Senators Edward Vincent and John Burton) authorizes the creation of a new pari-mutuel wagering system designed for the placement of wagers by telephone or other electronic media. The bill requires the CHRB to develop and adopt rules to regulate and license such advance deposit wagering operations, security, and advertising. The bill prohibits persons under 18 from opening an account. The bill directs some revenue from the wagering system to pension and welfare plans for backstretch personnel and to programs for preventing compulsive gambling.

AB 471 also establishes racetrack labor standards for backstretch employees as well as procedures for a union representation election. The bill directs the CHRB to oversee the

**(Continued on page 9)**

## CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

- 7 – Hollywood Park thoroughbred meet opens.**
- 7 – Golden Gate Fields thoroughbred meet opens.**
- 30 – CHRB monthly meeting at UC Davis.**

### DECEMBER

- 26 – Santa Anita Park thoroughbred meet opens.**
- 26 – Golden Gate Fields thoroughbred meet opens.**
- 26 – Cal Expo harness meet opens.**
- 27 – Los Alamitos quarter-horse meet opens.**

# BE OUR GUEST...



***The California Horse Racing Board believes the best way to regulate an industry is to be fully informed. The CHRB regularly solicits input from the public and the horse-racing industry, and this guest editorial page is one more forum for that purpose.***

*This guest editorial was submitted by Ron Liccardo, president of the Pari-Mutuel Employees Guild Local 280, which represents pari-mutuel workers throughout California. A pari-mutuel clerk himself since 1969, Liccardo has been a union officer since 1992.*

Pari-Mutuel Employees Guild Local 280 was formed some 60 years ago to represent the mutuel clerk, who used to travel the huge racing circuit throughout the entire State of California from Tanforan and Golden Gate Fields in the north to Del Mar, Santa Anita Park, Hollywood Park, and Los Alamitos in the south – and all of the fairs in between.

In those days, all of the mutuel department managers were Local 280 members. Even to this day, Local 280 members hold many managerial positions at major race-tracks and fairs in California.

California mutuel clerks are highly thought of across the country. Whenever they apply for work in a Nevada racebook, at the Breeders' Cup, or at any other track around the country, they only need to show their current CHRB license and they are hired immediately without having to jump through any hoops. Their qualifications are understood.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to be Guild officers participate in more activities that are outside the normal activities of a union than most people realize. For example, I attend the World Gaming Expo in Las Vegas and the University of Arizona's Racing Symposium in Tucson, so that I can report on the state of the industry to my membership and to the SEIU Advisory Board.

In recent years, Local 280 has extended an olive branch to other elements of the horse-racing industry, believing we are all part of the same team working for the betterment of the industry.

We have helped in every way possible to encourage passage and signing of all forms of creative legislation. We have utilized Political Action Committee money that is totally donated by our membership to support legislators who are in favor of protecting our jobs. Many times we must explain to our members and even to some legislators that the good of the industry comes first. Our members will get more jobs when more patrons come and participate in what we have to offer.

Instead of taking a combative position, we have learned to share ideas and thoughts to make this industry stronger. For too long, the various factions within the industry had been saying that without "me" putting on the show there would be no show at all. Nowadays, it is no longer them and us – no longer union, management, horsemen, and government. Nowadays, it is just "we" as a group, not individual interests.

By working together, we have accomplished many things. We negotiated five-year collective bargaining agreements to everyone's satisfaction. We brought about license fee reduction that benefits the industry by more than \$50 million a year. We obtained full-card simulcasting from out-of-state venues to supplement our ongoing north-south signal exchange. And now we are on the threshold of a new era with the advent of advance deposit wagering, which will allow our patrons to wager from home over the telephone and Internet.

On their face, some of these matters were not in the best interests of pari-mutuel employees, but we put aside our personal concerns and did what we felt was best for the entire industry. These accomplishments could only have been achieved through teamwork. If we continue in this manner, we will keep California in front where we belong.

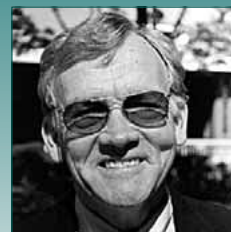
The relationship between labor and the California Horse Racing Board has been extremely good. In fact, each year it gets better than the last. Each new racing commissioner has been willing to learn all facets of the industry from all point of views. Some have gone behind the mutuel lines to talk to the mutuel clerks or walked the backstretch and talked to all employees.

Let's continue working together to move forward and keep California racing Number One.



# THE EQUINE PRESCRIPTION

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHRB  
EQUINE MEDICAL DIRECTOR



**DR. RON JENSEN**

The world and the equine industry are more vulnerable to an outbreak of animal disease than ever before due to globalization, free trade agreements, increased international travel of people and animals, increased world population, and even smuggling. And now we also must be concerned about bioterrorism.

Contamination spreads at the speed of transport, and international travel has increased 33 percent since 1988. The World Trade Organization and the North American Free Trade Agreement have made possible increased official commerce of live animals and animal products. These international trade agreements have led to a 28% increase in agricultural imports to the United States since 1995.

As the world population grows and needs more space and resources, humans are living in closer contact with other species than ever before, which increases the chance of exposing new species to new diseases. An example of this was an outbreak of Nipah virus in Malaysia in 1998-99. This virus usually infects wild fruit bats. However, it found new hosts due to intensive pig farming that encroached on former jungles. One hundred people died, mostly pig farmers, and millions of pigs were culled, devastating the Malaysian pork industry.

When a country or an industry experiences an outbreak of a serious infectious disease, there can be enormous economic consequences. In the recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease, nearly 4 million animals have been destroyed to date and it has cost the British government millions. While this disease does not affect horses, racing was halted in Britain for a period of time, and certain countries would not allow horses from Britain to be imported into their country for any purpose, including racing.

The British government spent billions combating the oc-

currence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, also known as Mad Cow Disease, and the beef industry there has experienced a 99-percent decrease in beef exports. In Taiwan, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease caused the destruction of 3.8 million pigs and a loss of \$15 million in lost exports. In the Netherlands, Swine Fever resulted in the destruction of 11 million pigs representing two-thirds of that country's national herd.

The economic impact of the introduction of a new or foreign disease is not limited to the losses caused by actual dis-

ease itself, but may stop or seriously restrict the movement of horses both within the country involved and internationally. If a new or a foreign animal disease is diagnosed in a country, the trading partners of that country often close their borders to animals from the country experiencing the disease. When West Nile virus was first diagnosed in horses in the United States in 1999, the European Community, Brazil, and Hong Kong temporarily restricted the

importation of horses from the United States. Currently, Argentina is restricting the import of US horses reportedly because of concerns about West Nile virus.

While the equine industry in California has not experienced a serious outbreak of an infectious disease for some time, we may not be so fortunate in the future. West Nile virus, first diagnosed in the northeastern part of the United States in 1999, now has spread to several other states, and it may very well travel to California in the future. As of October 15, there were 191 confirmed cases of clinical West Nile virus infections in horses in 15 different states.

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, in animals and

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**California Department of Food and Agriculture:  
(916) 654-1447**

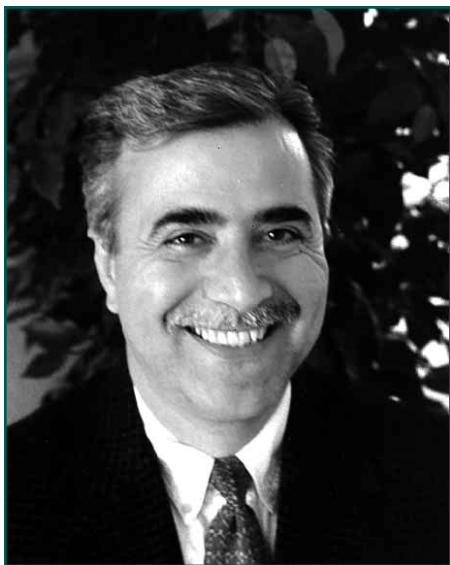
**United States Department of Agriculture:  
(916) 857-6170**

**California Animal Health and Food Safety:  
(530) 752-8700**

**California Department of Health Services:  
(916) 327-0332**

**(Continued on page 11)**





**MORY ATASHKAR**

## Feeling Right at Home

*The Winner's Circle Award recognizes excellence among CHRB employees. News & Review editor Mike Marten interviewed the Year-2001 recipient, Mory Atashkar.*

**M**ory Atashkar has had a difficult life.

Most of us can't even imagine being unable to return to our homeland due to an authoritative regime, taking up residence in a foreign country without any friends or other contacts to help in the transition, learning a new language and building a career from scratch, and raising children thousands of miles away from their grandmother and their heritage.

Yet here he is, 27 years later, a survivor, a devoted husband and father, a valued member of the California Horse Racing Board staff, a naturalized citizen, and an American in every sense of the word.

"This is my home, the birthplace of my kids," said Atashkar. "Without knowing me, this is the country that accepted me, that gave me an opportunity to go to college, that allowed me to build a new life.

"When I think of what this country means to me, tears come to my eyes. I can't find the words to describe my gratitude and my love for the United States."

The same attributes that have helped Atashkar meet the challenges of a difficult life have made him an indispensable member of the CHRB team and a worthy recipient of the CHRB's 2001 Winner's Circle Award, which recognizes the special contributions of staff members in service to the public and the California horse-racing industry.

As the chief information officer supervising the CHRB's management information systems division (MIS), Atashkar is the Board's resident computer expert – the person to call when that report you've been working on for three months somehow mysteriously disappears into cyberspace or the system crashes every time you try to download e-mail.

"Mory here," can be the most comforting words in the world when you're under a tight deadline and telephoning for help.

"I knew that I had to make something out of my life. Even when everything fell apart for me in Iran, the dream did not end for me."

**Mory Atashkar**

But there is much more to Atashkar's job. MIS manages all aspects of the CHRB's statewide computer operations, upgrading the equipment, developing systems for digital identification of horses and digital photo-card licensing, providing investigators with access to the criminal justice system data base, and maintaining a CHRB Website that delivers on-line services to the public.

The bulk of this network has evolved since 1994, when Atashkar transferred to the CHRB from the Department of Motor Vehicles, where he had done similar work, and the Department of Corrections before that.

In addition to his normal CHRB duties, Atashkar is one of the key players in helping the Association of Racing Commissioners International develop an international Web portal that provides members access to licensing information.

Not bad for someone who didn't know the first thing about computers when he came to this country from Iran in 1974. But then again, Atashkar has always demonstrated an ability to learn quickly and make the best of situations.

"Although my family was very well off, an unfortunate accident resulted in the death of my father and the loss of our wealth when I was very young," explained Atashkar. "Everyone had to work to help the family survive – my

**(Continued on page 10)**

# ROBERT TOURTELOT COMPLETES TWO

**H**is first day on the job as a California racing commissioner back in 1993 was a sign of things to come for Robert Tourtelot.

First he cast an important vote for a new executive director of the California Horse Racing Board, then he helped sort out a rift between thoroughbred owners and trainers that was threatening to tear the racing community apart.



Robert Tourtelot

“...I did what I felt was right in my mind and in my heart.”

Things never lightened up. During his eight years on the Board, Tourtelot served on eight CHRB standing committees, including those overseeing the critical areas of race dates, stewards, pari-mutuel operations, legislation, horsemen’s organizations and by-laws, and simulcast operations.

Despite the demands of his law practice, Tourtelot accepted additional responsibilities by serving as CHRB chairman for the last 1½ years of his term. This put him on center stage as the Board grappled with a myriad of complex matters relating to racetrack acquisitions, medication and drug testing, labor and housing in stable areas, jockey advertising, and race dates.

With so many factions within the California horse-racing industry, nothing ever came easily. It seemed like someone either had something to gain or something to lose on each vote, and like all commissioners, Tourtelot had to choose sides. He always chose the side of fairness, common sense, and the public interest.

“It was sometimes difficult to rule against friends who had an interest in these matters, but I did what I felt was right in my mind and in my heart,” said Tourtelot, reflecting back on his eight years of service.

Judging from the praise Tourtelot received at his last Board meeting from industry representatives in September, he obviously made the right decisions.

“I appreciate your willingness to look at all sides of the issues,” said Ed Halpern, executive director of the California

Thoroughbred Trainers.

“All we ask for is a fair shake, and we always received a fair shake from you,” said Ron Liccardo, president of the Pari-Mutuel Employees Guild Local 280.

“I’m more excited about our prospects today than ever before, and it all happened under your leadership,” said Rick Baedeker, president of Hollywood Park.

They all lined up at the podium to thank Tourtelot, one after the other: John Van de Kamp, president of the Thoroughbred Owners of California; Sherwood Chillingworth, executive vice president of the Oak Tree Racing Association; Lee Hall, shop steward with the Service Employees International Union Local 1877; and Rod Blonien, a Sacramento lobbyist who represents many interests in California horse racing.

“You brought good sense to the job and you came with a lot of good advice,” said Blonien, reeling off a long list of things to Tourtelot’s credit. Then referring to a new law that will allow patrons to wager over the telephone and Internet, Blonien concluded, “Advance deposit wagering is the final jewel in your crown.”

No one was more emotional than Roy Wood, the executive director whom Tourtelot helped select on October 29, 1993.

“You have always shown integrity and honesty in your relations with the CHRB staff and for the people of California,” said Wood. “We are all better off because Bob Tourtelot walked those steps with us along the way.”

And then it was Tourtelot’s turn. He described a telephone call in 1993 from then Governor Pete Wilson inquiring whether Tourtelot would be interested in serving as a racing commissioner. Tourtelot indicated that he didn’t know anything about horse racing. Wilson said that was in Tourtelot’s favor because that meant he had no personal agenda.

“I’m sure glad that I accepted the appointment,” said Tourtelot, “because these have been some of the best years of my life. I’ve met many incredible people in horse racing – track operators, horse owners, trainers, jockeys, labor, and of course the CHRB staff and our executive director. These are the ones behind the scenes who make the commissioners look good. I’m grateful to you all.”

A few weeks later, Tourtelot was seated behind his antique oak desk in the Los Angeles law firm of Tourtelot & Butler, taking calls from clients and devoting full-time to solving corporate and general business problems and issues as well as dealing with cases in real estate litigation, personal injury law, business litigation, labor and employ-

# TERMS AS RACING COMMISSIONER

ment law, product liability litigation, and wrongful death law.

The photographs of horses on the walls, the leather sculpture horse on the credenza behind the desk, and other racing mementos were constant reminders of his “other life,” the one he has just left behind.

“I will certainly miss being at the center of what’s happening on the California racing scene,” Tourtelot lamented, adding that he will continue to watch closely from the sidelines and offer encouragement whenever he can.

“Racing has been on a downward trend in terms of on-track attendance, field size, and other areas, but I for one think the sport has a bright future,” said Tourtelot. “In my view, there are so many people in California who are devoted to the sport, I believe we have an excellent opportunity to reverse the tide. Only time will tell, but I am optimistic.”

“I’ve met many incredible people in horse racing – track operators, horse owners, trainers, jockeys, labor, and of course the CHRB staff and our executive director. These are the ones behind the scenes who make the commissioners look good. I’m grateful to you all.”

Robert Tourtelot



**Goodwill Ambassadors — Bob Tourtelot and former CHRB Commissioners Ralph Scurfield (second from left) and George Nicholaw attended the 1994 Kentucky Derby together. They were joined by their wives (clockwise from center), Susan Tourtelot, Betty Nicholaw, and Barbara Scurfield.**



And now that the Emmy Award winner and Academy Award nominee has retired from the production company that he founded in 1970 and reduced his workload to occasionally writing novels and occasional television scripts, Landsburg has free time to devote to one of his other passions – horse racing.

Last November he accepted an appointment by Governor Gray Davis to the California Horse Racing Board, and last month his fellow commissioners elected Landsburg chairman, a post that requires a tremendous commitment of time and energy.

## Long Involvement in Horse Racing

This isn't Landsburg's first time at bat for the horse-racing industry. He has been deeply involved in racing for nearly 25 years, beginning in 1977 with his first share of his first thoroughbred. Since then he has owned close to 400 horses.

"My long involvement in racing led me to look for ways I could improve the way our sport operated," said Landsburg. "In 1993 I became a founding director of the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC), which sought better representation for the owners of California. And I served on a number of volunteer committees for the CHRB."

Landsburg donated his time and expertise in the production of several videos promoting the horse-racing industry, including one for the CHRB titled "Protecting Racing's Integrity." He also made a video for the TOC that demonstrated to the Legislature just how important racing is to California.

The roots of Landsburg's interest in racing go way back to his boyhood, when he sat on his father's shoulders to watch the races at Yonkers Raceway near his home in the Bronx.

"My father was the nicest man in the world and the softest spoken. I had never heard him shout until he cheered for a horse," Landsburg recalled. "I figured that if he liked it that much, then I would, too.

"When I was old enough to bet, I acquired my racing education in the 'Bleachers' on the roof of Belmont Park. That was the classroom where I struggled to learn the secrets of the *Daily Racing Form*."

His other love at an early age was writing – a talent he crafted during eight years of parochial school training called Yeshiva, then in high school and at New York University. Along the way he won a radio scriptwriting prize in a contest sponsored by Ohio State University.

Landsburg honed his skills in the U.S. Army as a writer, director, and producer of special events for the American Forces Network in Europe. Following his discharge in 1956, this broadcasting experience coupled with a lucky break helped him become one of the youngest directors ever when he joined the NBC radio affiliate in New York at the age of 21. From there he moved to Los Angeles in 1961 to join the

"My father was the nicest man in the world and the softest spoken. I had never heard him shout until he cheered for a horse. I figured that if he liked it that much, then I would, too.

Alan Landsburg

new Wolper Productions, which was his opening into television. Since then he has been responsible for more than 2,000 hours of network programming, including the "Biography" series, "National Geographic" specials, "The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau," and "That's Incredible."

His wife of 27 years, Linda Otto, is herself an award-winning producer and director. And his children by a previous marriage also are in the business. Valerie is a television actress, Michael is a film technician, and Shana is a casting director.

## Never Avoids Challenges

With so much going on in his career and personal life, Landsburg could easily have avoided getting into the affairs of racing. He could simply have enjoyed the sport as a passive owner. But it's not in his nature to avoid challenges. The same characteristics that drove him to tackle sensitive issues in films also compelled him to confront problems in horse racing.

High on his list of concerns was the California Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, which represented both owners and trainers in negotiations with race-tracks over purses and other matters of critical importance to horsemen. The HBPA officers and directors tended to be trainers rather than owners.

"There was a need to divide representation of owners and trainers," Landsburg explained. "When their interests were conjoined, we could never be assured that owners were as properly represented as they should be. That's the nicest way to put it."

## Founding Director of TOC

Landsburg and other prominent owners presented their case to the CHRB, the Legislature, and the governor, which led to the recognition and funding of the TOC to represent horse owners. The HBPA eventually became the California Thoroughbred Trainers. Those two groups now work closely together for the common good of horsemen in California.

Landsburg stepped down as a TOC director when he re-



ceived his appointment to the CHRB. He also resigned from the board of YouBet.com and gave up all of his financial interests in that online racing and wagering network.

Now with the deck clear, Landsburg can focus his attention on some of the pressing issues of horse racing, backed by the regulatory power of the CHRB and the influence that goes with it.

“Governor Davis has given me a chance to put my years of racing experience to use as a CHRB commissioner, and my fellow commissioners have added to that responsibility by electing me chairman,” said Landsburg. “As I begin a year-long term at the helm, with a Board of truly racing-smart commissioners, I am sure that we can fashion leadership that will be thinking ‘out-of-the-box’.

“I am concerned about racing’s diminishing audience. I worry about the slimming of our foal crops. I fear the effects on the entire racing community of the attrition of the wagering handle. I also believe that adversity is the flip side of opportunity.

“I learned a great deal about the inner workings of racing while I was with the TOC. I am proud of the accomplishments of that organization. Meaningful forward-looking legislation, marketing experiments, ownership-encouragement programs – those are all part of the changes TOC helped to achieve. I’m glad I was there.

“Now we are entering a new era in racing with the onset of account wagering. But we cannot simply tie our fate to the computer screen, the telephone, and the TV set. We must find new, improved ways of filling our grandstands and our starting gates. We must find ways to protect the jobs and welfare programs of all racing employees. We must accelerate the backstretch ‘integrity’ programs, and carve improved rules for the management of horse medication. We must streamline our adjudication methods. And we must not do all of the above in the same old manner. There are untried roads to be paved, and I’d like to help set the course for them.

“At this moment when racing is in the midst of change, I want to be part of shepherding the industry and assuring its future. I share this Board with independent thinkers, and I believe that together we can return brilliance to California racing.

“I would like to finish by saying that when it comes to horse racing, I still feel like a kid on my father’s shoulders. During every stretch run, I remember his smile, and his shout of pleasure. Is it any wonder I want to see the sport survive?”



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## LEGISLATION

(Continued from page 2)

conduct of the union bargaining agents’ recognition procedures.

AB 471 also directs the CHRB to adopt emergency regulations to establish employee housing standards at licensed racetracks, and requires the CHRB to develop permanent housing regulations within 18 months thereafter.

AB 762 – Chapter 848 (Assemblyman Lou Papan) allows the San Mateo County Fair to run its fair race meeting at another location in the event the Bay Meadows facility closes.

AB 672 – Chapter 27 (Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin) requires any fair or thoroughbred racing association that conducts a race meeting at the same time that the Humboldt County Fair is running to share the same shared satellite wagering revenue agreement currently in place with the San Mateo County Fair.

AB 856 – Chapter 783 (Assemblyman Herb Wesson) is a technical cleanup bill that clarifies language in AB 471.

AB 1093 – Chapter 933 (Assemblyman Mike Briggs) establishes an accelerated adjudication process for medication violations for the alleged use of prohibited substances as defined under Class I, II or III of the Board’s schedule of prohibited substances. These cases will be referred directly to the Office of Administrative Hearings for administrative adjudication and preparation of a proposed decision for action by the Board. The bill also authorizes monetary penalties up

to \$50,000 for a medication violation and up to \$100,000 for any other violation of the California Horse Racing Law.

The following bills were vetoed:

SB 416 (Senator Edward Vincent) would have defined a “California-bred paint horse” as a paint horse foal conceived by a stallion standing in California at the time of conception, and would have permitted the inclusion of paint horses in quarter-horse meetings.

AB 186 (Assemblyman Edward Chavez) would have exempted quarter-horse associations from paying the out-of-state license fee to the State while directing revenue from the out-of-state betting system to the official registering agency.

AB 1186 (Assemblyman Mark Wyland) would have allowed a thoroughbred racing association and the organization representing thoroughbred horsemen to agree to change the portion deducted from the pari-mutuel pool provided that the reduction would only have affected funds available for commissions and purses.



three brothers, my sister, and even me, the youngest at 6 years old. We all had to contribute.

"I worked odd jobs in southern Tehran. I sold newspapers, watched stores, carried water, and ran errands. Later, when I was in high school and adult school, I did plumbing, welding, and tailoring. I worked as an auto mechanic, a veterinary assistant, and a technician in a pharmaceutical research lab. I even served as a military investigator.

"Through it all, from the beginning of my life, I always have been a visionary. I knew that I had to make something out of my life. Even when everything fell apart for me in Iran, the dream did not end for me."

Determined to get a higher education, Atashkar obtained a student visa and journeyed to the United States in 1974 to attend college in Washington, D.C. He intended to eventually return to Iran, but in 1979 the country's political turmoil forced Atashkar into exile.

Atashkar wound up in Marysville, California, where he enrolled in computer classes at Yuba Community College.

"My English was very limited, so I devoted myself to learning the language as quickly as possible," he explained. "I avoided socializing with other Iranians in the area because it would have been too easy for me to fall back on my native language (Farsi) in their company. I forced myself to learn English.

"I also learned three other important languages: COBOL, FORTRAN, and BASIC, the essential computer languages for business and science applications. These languages, including English, changed my life."

Atashkar eventually earned a degree in business administration with an emphasis on computer science from Cal State Sacramento, then moved through a series of jobs until he joined state government. Along the way he met Theresa, his

wife of 23 years, while she was stationed at Beale Air Force Base. They have one daughter, Shamsie, who is pursuing a college education in the field of medicine, and a son, Bejan, who is a seventh grade honors student.

Last year, overcoming his own fears, Atashkar returned to Iran to visit his family for the first time since he left more than a quarter-of-a-century ago. He didn't take his wife and children with him because he wasn't sure what the reception would be in Iran, and he was concerned about their safety.

"Sixty relatives came to meet me at the airport, but my 94-year-old mother was too ill to leave the house, so I saw her later," he said. "Everyone was so old! Is that the way I look?"

Atashkar might return to Iran some day, and he might take his children along the next time. But he's not in any hurry. He has a full life here – his family, his job, the usual things – and one not-so-usual activity.

"My new passion is music, specifically playing the Tomback, which is a percussion instrument that I taught myself to play when I was 10 years old," he explained. "I've met other musicians, and we play whenever we get the chance. Right now we're playing Irish music at a bookstore.

"Now that's something, isn't it? A guy from Iran playing Irish music at an American bookstore. Like I said, this is the land of opportunity."



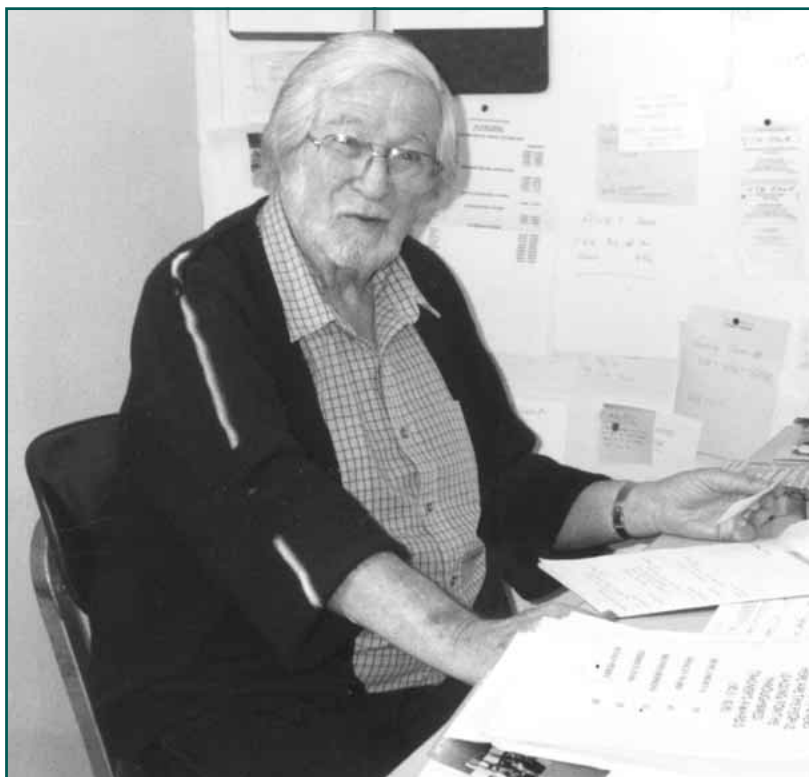
## Comings and Goings at the CHRB

Alfonso (Richie) Guerrero is a new investigator on the Southern California thoroughbred circuit. He spent 26 years with the Los Angeles Police Department. He retired from the LAPD at the rank of police sergeant.

Douglas Aschenbrenner, another LAPD retiree, is a new investigator at Los Alamitos. He spent 25 years with the LAPD. Most recently he worked as a court security officer with the U. S. Marshall's office.

Doris Figgins, a racing technician in the Sacramento headquarters office, accepted a promotion with the State Teachers Retirement System.

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### GOING...GOING...GONE???

After 60 years in California horse racing, Charlie Palmer announced his retirement as racing secretary at the Big Fresno Fair. The 74-year-old racing official said he wants to spend more time with his wife, Patricia.

Palmer began his career parking cars and cleaning stalls at racetracks. He moved up through the ranks to assistant operations manager, stable superintendent, patrol judge, and finally racing secretary at various fairs.

Friends say Palmer has been talking about retiring for years, but he always answers the call when the fairs beg him to return. If Palmer really has retired, we thank him for 60 years of dedicated service. If he continues working, this is still a good opportunity to acknowledge everything he's done for horse racing.

## EQUINE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

(Continued from page 4)

occasionally in humans. The symptoms include stumbling or incoordination, weakness of limbs, partial paralysis, and muscle twitching. Of the 191 confirmed cases, 40, or about 20 percent, have resulted in death.

In 1999 and 2000, 85 horses on the East Coast were infected with the virus, and 32 of those horses died. Although horses can be infected by the virus, they are considered a dead-end host. There is no documentation that infected horses can spread the virus to uninfected horses or other animals, including humans.

California health and regulatory agencies have combined their efforts to increase surveillance for all mosquito-borne diseases, including West Nile virus. The agencies involved are the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the California Department of Health Services.

Birds and mosquitoes are involved in the transmission of the disease and are an important part of the surveillance process. Authorities are looking for anything suspicious, such as an increased number of dead birds, especially dead crows, ravens, and raptors. Birds that die suddenly with no known cause also are collected for post-mortem examinations at a California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory. Tissues are collected for virus isolation at the California Arbovirus Laboratory at UC Davis.

Mosquitoes are routinely trapped by mosquito and vector

control agencies throughout the state and checked for Western Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis, and West Nile virus.

Domestic chickens are also an important part of the surveillance process. Flocks of chickens are strategically placed at various locations in the state. Blood samples are periodically collected from the chickens and examined for the presence of titers for the encephalitic diseases.

In addition, blood samples from any horse that exhibits symptoms of encephalitis can be analyzed at no cost.

West Nile is a disease that we have some forewarning about, but it is impossible to know what other diseases might be just around the corner. The USDA and state regulatory agencies have done a good job of keeping foreign animal diseases out of the United States, but it is unrealistic to expect governmental agencies to do it all.

All members of the equine industry must be aware that the possibility of an outbreak of an infectious disease is a very real possibility and must maintain a high level of vigilance. The first person to call is the practicing veterinarian – our first line of defense in protecting our horses from infectious diseases. If the veterinarian suspects a new or unusual disease, he or she will know who to notify.



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